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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 001061

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: LACK OF ELECTIONS PROGRESS - STALL TACTICS?

REF: A. A) CONAKRY 1038

[1](#)B. B) CONAKRY 1023

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY. The international donor community is becoming increasingly frustrated with the Government of Guinea,s (GOG) lack of progress on elections, raising questions as to whether political will actually exists. Within the government, several different elements appear to be intentionally stalling while others look to sabotage the credibility of potential opponents. No single GoG official has emerged who can play the critical role of driving things forward. Instead, petty politics threaten to subvert the electoral process altogether. END SUMMARY.

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MINIMAL PROGRESS ON ELECTIONS  
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[1](#)2. (C) Given that the GoG has made little progress on basic election preparations over the last few months, there is a growing perception among observers, as well as the general population, that the government is stalling. Formal establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) remains deadlocked because the opposition bloc cannot reach consensus on two contested seats. The GoG has not committed to any specific election preparation timeline despite the fact that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has provided an updated proposed timeline that targets March for holding elections. The GoG,s official position continues to be that elections will be held in December despite all indications to the contrary. Meanwhile, GoG officials point to external factors, such as the delayed arrival of the European Union,s (EU) voter registration kits (now scheduled to arrive in December rather than October) as reasons for the slow pace. Exacerbating the problem of slow progress is the fact that the GoG seems to have no public information campaign to update the public on election preparations.

[1](#)3. (C) While many believe that the government is stalling, the problem may simply be that the government lacks capacity to effectively organize elections. As a result, the donor community is looking into possible capacity building activities, in addition to the significant support already in place.

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EVERYONE HAS REASONS TO STALL  
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[1](#)4. (S) Government capability aside, there are at least two different groups within the government that may be looking to impede progress on elections. From President Conte,s camp, represented by the majority &Party for Unity and Progress8 (PUP), certain elements may simply be buying time. Under the

Constitution, if the President dies, the President of the National Assembly would assume power. Given that Conte,s health is reportedly frail and that the PUP currently holds the National Assembly, they have an interest in delaying as long as they can in order to avoid the opposition possibly taking over the National Assembly and thereby positioning itself in line for the presidency.

15. (C) Another reason for the PUP to buy time is that it gives the party more opportunity to either discredit Prime Minister Kouyate,s administration or wait for it to self-destruct. While Kouyate appointed the ministers, many of the remaining government officials are long-time bureaucrats who may have much to lose with a shift of power. The Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for organizing the elections, has a number of these employees on staff. Finally, delayed elections give the PUP much needed time to try and rebuild its popular support base, which was heavily degraded during the January/February strike.

16. (S) Representing the other government camp, Prime Minister Kouyate himself may actually be stalling. Within the first two weeks of September, a new political party was registered at the Ministry of Interior, which is rumored to be linked directly to Kouyate. If true, the possibility that Kouyate is building his own political party coupled with the idea that he may be financing youth organizations and other elements of civil society (reftel B), signals that Kouyate is positioning himself politically. Kouyate may be impeding timely elections in order to build up a broader support base.

17. (C) Kouyate,s alleged political dallying is cause for concern among civil society organizations. Embassy contacts report that Kouyate was put into power because he was

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perceived as an objective, non-partisan candidate. If he is now muddying the water with political ambitions, contacts says it raises doubts as to his integrity and ability to fulfill his responsibilities given that his new focus on personal gain over the national good.

18. (C) Outside of government, a third group may also be intentionally delaying election processes. For perhaps the first time in Guinea,s history, opposition parties may have a real chance of assuming power. However, there are at least five major opposition parties with no clear front-runner. The fact that the opposition has not been able to agree on the final two CENI seats, something that on the surface appears to be a mere technicality, points to the likelihood that these parties are already fighting to position themselves within their own opposition bloc. Most of these parties lack financing and have an uphill battle before them as they look to campaigning across the country in order to raise popular support. Buying time could work in their favor as well.

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COMMENT

19. (C) Whether elections progress is slow because of a simple lack of capacity, intentional delay tactics on the part of key political groups, or a combination of the two, the fact is that they are not moving anywhere fast. These legislative elections may be the most important elections Guinea has seen in decades and for that reason, it is critical that they be free and fair. Guinea seems to operate on its own timeline, which may be acceptable to the population if they can be assured of transparency. At the same time, the GoG,s lack of communication poses a real threat to short-term stability. It is not just the international community that is looking for things to move forward ) the local population is demanding it as well.  
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